OVERVIEW:

- The Port of Coutts operates 24 hours daily, and is the largest Port of Entry (POE) in Alberta. Hundreds of commerical and personal vehicles travel through this major thoroughfare on any given day.

- In Alberta, there are border crossings located at Coutts, Del Bontia and Carway. Coutts is the only 24-hour crossing.

- The Coutts POE is positioned on Highway 4 on the Canadian side, and I-15 on the USA side. Couuts is in the Milk River detachment area, Del Bonita is in the Raymond detachment area, and Carway is in the Cardston detachment area.

BACKGROUND OF EVENTS at COUTTS, ALBERTA:

- On January 29th, 2022 a truck convoy consisting of approximatley 1000 vehicles, including several 100 semi trucks, staged in Lethbridge Alberta and rolled south to the Coutts Border crossing. Over the course of the day the convoy group made several loops on Highway 4 between the POE and the town of Milk River. At one point, in the later part of the afternoon, on January 30th, 2022, the peaceful protest transitioned into a blockade, where the convoy participants suddenly blocked all south and northbound of Highway 4, just north of the Coutts POE.

- Over the next several days the RCMP were able to leverage the CCMG negotitating team to keep a single lane of travel open in each direction, allowing for restricted movement of traffic. There were brief periods of time where the protest organizers would shut down all traffic, but the CCMG team was able to negotiate a re-opening of a single lane. The response of police remained focused on attaining voluntary compliance at all times.

- Alberta RCMP attempted to secure tow trucks from every tow company in Alberta with negative results. Even companies on the borders of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Northern Montana refused to get involved, citing potential threats and negative Google service reviews as detrimental to their livelihood.

CAN - RELATIVITY Production 06 PB.NSC.CAN.00009205_REL.0001

- The need for heavy equipment to clear the highway of vehicles quickly became critical for any enforcement action. The investigative team had secured some light duty tow equipment (standard tow truck from Calgary police for personal vehicles), and had one heavy duty tow truck owned by the City of Edmonton. Knowing that one tow truck was not sufficient to support police with any enforcement action, investigators continued working on acquiring additional towing equipment.

- On February 5th, 2022 a CAF request was submitted, specifically requesting assistance with heavy tow assets.

- On February 8th, 2022 at 17:00 hrs, on the heels of announcements by Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, indicating provincial mandates would be lifted in the Province of Alberta within the coming weeks, the mood at the Coutts blockade appeared to escalate. Shortly after the announcements protesters realigned the existing commercial vehicles and farm tractors to completely block the POE at the Coutts location.

  On February 10th, 2022, when it was clear that protesters would not negotiate with police and advised that the border would remain shut until all Provincial and Federal health restrictions were lifted, investigators commenced planning to arrest key organizers on the morning of the 11th. In the evening of the 10th, credible information was learned that a small group,within the larger protest groups, was determined and prepared to commit violence, including the killing of police, if police took any action to breakup the blockade. At this point the matter turned from dealing with a public order event to the investigation of a public and police safety event.

- On February 13th, 2022 the Government of Alberta had procured five (5) confirmed tow trucks, and were working on a sixth.

- On February 13th 2022 at 20:00 hrs a large farm tractor and a semi truck (no trailer) arrived at a police check stop to the east of the Coutts POE, with the intent of traveling to the blockade site. The two vehicles failed to stop at the check stop and drove aggressively towards our members. They drove directly at one of our police vehicles, narrowly missing it, but only because the members was able to move out of the way just in time. Both drivers were later identified with the tractor driver having been arrested that evening. The truck driver is still at large. Both the farm tractor and semi truck were seized as offence related property by investigators.

- On the heels of these seizures, thaevarrestnof 4 key individuals was made later that night, and in the early morning hours of February 14th, 2022, search warrants were executed on three (3) separate trailers located on a residential property located a short distance from Smugglers Saloon (a meeting location for Coutts protestors). A total of eleven (11) individuals were arrested and a significant cache of weapons were seized inclusive of: thirteen (13) long guns, two (2) handguns, multiple sets of body armour, a machete, several high capacity magazines, and an excessive amount of ammunition.

- Later in the afternoon of February 14th, 2022 an identified male associate of individuals in custody was stopped by tactical assets on his way to the Coutts blockage location. Investigators believe the male had an immediate intention to shoot members on site. Search of his vehicle post arrest produced a combat style shotgun and a long rifle.

- Once news of the weapons being seized became public, organizers of the blockade approached the CCMG members around 16:00 hrs voicing their intention to open the roadway and dissolve the blockade. The reason provided was not wanting to be associated with the group that was willing to commit violence. An agreement was struck to vacate the location by the following morning of February 15h, 2022.

  Of note, on February 14th, at approximately 1400 hrs, the Federal Government invoked the Emergencies Act (EA). Although the highway still blocked until approximately 1600 hrs, the catalyst that led the group to dismantdismantling the blockade was the arrest of those individuals who were committed to using violence. Although the EA had been announced, the specifics of the order were not known to police at that time and as such the use of any orders under the EA were not considered.

  It should also be noted that operations on the American side resumed later that evening, with traffic able to cross into the U.S. Operations did not resume on the Canadian side until approximately 1100 hrs on February 15th, but this was due to a request by the RCMP command team to wait until the next morning. If protesters did not keep their word and vacate the area by the morning of the 15th, police were prepared to physically remove the group that day. If enforcement action was required, it would have been important to our operations that no traffic be allowed to cross the border and potentially become involved in our enforcement action.